



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Spring Valley partners release additional groundwater sampling results 3 of 6 results show elevated perchlorate; further evaluation planned**

**WASHINGTON** – Analytical results for three of the groundwater samples collected in December from six recently-installed monitoring wells show elevated levels of perchlorate in the groundwater in two areas of the Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site. Preliminary results from these six wells are being released jointly today by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency and the D.C. Department of Health. These new monitoring wells supplement the first round of sampling reported in October from the 23 monitoring wells installed last summer.

Spring Valley was the site of U.S. Army chemical weapons development and testing during World War I. A groundwater study is part of the ongoing investigation and cleanup of the site.

The highest perchlorate concentration detected in the new monitoring wells, 70 parts per billion (ppb), was found in groundwater from a monitoring well located in the 4800 block of Glenbrook Road, on the southeastern portion of the Spring Valley project area. Groundwater from an adjacent monitoring well in the same block returned a perchlorate concentration of 60 ppb. These two monitoring wells were installed just to the west of three World War I-era ordnance and laboratory glassware disposal pits. Two of these pits have been removed. The third has been partially removed, and is scheduled to be completed in 2007. Perchlorate was also detected at a level of 48 ppb in a third new monitoring well located at the intersection of Loughboro Road and MacArthur Boulevard, about 1,000 feet south of the Dalecarlia Reservoir. A sampling point located about 400 feet to the east of this monitoring well was tested in the August sampling round, and indicated a perchlorate level of 24 ppb.

At present, there is no known use or consumption of the groundwater in Spring Valley. The District of Columbia's drinking water comes from the Potomac River. The river water is processed by the Washington Aqueduct, which regularly tests samples from its Dalecarlia Reservoir and the finished drinking water. The results of that testing consistently show that the drinking water is safe.

The parameters searched for in the groundwater samples included chemical warfare materiel and their breakdown products, explosives and their breakdown products, volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds, perchlorate and various metals such as arsenic, lead and mercury.

Historical research of the Army's World War I activities in the area indicates perchlorate was involved in at least two aspects of research at the experiment station. Perchlorate was studied in the production of screening smokes and in reaction with mustard agent. It is also a component of road flares, airbags, fireworks and other commercial products, and may be naturally occurring in some locations. Perchlorate dissolves easily and moves quickly in groundwater and surface water. Under certain circumstances, perchlorate can interfere with the functions of the thyroid gland. These perchlorate detections cannot be conclusively linked to the burial pits with the current data, but the proximity has been noted by the partners and will be further investigated.

In January, the Department of Defense established 24 ppb as the current level of concern for managing perchlorate in water. This concentration is in line with the EPA's recommended preliminary cleanup goal of 24.5 ppb in water.

Three of the six newly installed monitoring wells are background wells, installed northeast and outside of the project area to help determine whether compounds detected within the project area are related to World War I activities, are the result of other human activities or are naturally occurring. Perchlorate was not detected in the sampling results from the background wells.

An unconfirmed result for HMX, an acronym for high melting explosive, at 0.16 ppb from one of the Glenbrook Road monitoring wells was noted by the partners, and they will continue to monitor that finding.

Arsenic was found at low levels in four of the six new monitoring wells. The federal drinking water standard for arsenic is 10 ppb. The highest concentration in the groundwater results was 10.4 ppb at one of the two Glenbrook Road wells. Arsenic, a naturally occurring substance, was a constituent in some World War I chemical warfare agents and is a known carcinogen. It occurs in several forms, often in compounds with other chemical elements.

This most-recent groundwater data is undergoing validation and review by the Partnership. This review will include evaluation of all the detections, including levels of various metals found below federal drinking water standards. A report will be released to the public after all of the results have been validated and reviewed by the partners.

The August and December sampling results comprise the first phase of data gathering in the ongoing Spring Valley groundwater study. The partners will plan the next phase of the investigation in the coming months. The next steps may include: better defining the interface between groundwater and surface water (creeks and the reservoir); better defining chemistry and groundwater flow in the vicinity of the perchlorate detections; evaluating possible sources for the perchlorate found; further delineating the extent of perchlorate in groundwater in the project area; and evaluating the importance of chemical detections at specific wells on the western portion of the project area near the Dalecarlia Reservoir and the southeastern portion in the vicinity of Glenbrook Road and Rockwood Parkway.

Spring Valley is a residential neighborhood in northwest Washington, D.C. The Corps of Engineers, along with its regulatory partners — D.C. Department of Health and EPA — are investigating and cleaning up environmental contamination that remains from past Department of Defense work in the neighborhood.

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<http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm>